



April 19, 2004

EPA Region 6 Records Ctr.



Dear Land Use Committee members,

Thank you for participating in the April 6<sup>th</sup> Land Use Committee meeting for the reuse planning process for the Himco Dump Superfund site. It was a pleasure to meet you and we are looking forward to working with you on the project in the months ahead. The Committee's active meeting discussions will serve as a strong foundation as the project moves forward.

Please note that the second Land Use Committee meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, in the Elkhart City Hall Council Chambers from 7-9 pm.

Please also find enclosed a summary of the first Land Use Committee meeting, as well as an updated contact list for Land Use Committee members, project resource members, and E<sup>2</sup> Inc. staff.

We look forward to working with you again during the Committee's second meeting. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (434) 975-6700 or [jwilkinson@e2inc.com](mailto:jwilkinson@e2inc.com).

Sincerely,

James Wilkinson  
Project Manager  
E<sup>2</sup> Inc. – Ecology & Economics

Elkhart, IN  
Himco Dump Superfund Redevelopment Initiative Pilot Project  
Meeting Summary

**First Land Use Committee Meeting**  
**Elkhart City Municipal Building, 229 S. 2<sup>nd</sup> St.**  
**Wednesday, April 7, 2004**  
**6:00 pm - 9:00 pm**

**Introductions and Committee Purpose**

City of Elkhart Brownfields Coordinator Craig Hodgson and consultant team member James Wilkinson welcomed participants to the first Land Use Committee meeting for the Himco Dump Superfund Redevelopment Initiative Pilot Project. Mr. Hodgson explained that the City of Elkhart has been awarded a grant from EPA's Superfund Redevelopment Initiative to develop future land use recommendations for the Himco Dump Superfund site.

Mr. Wilkinson explained that the purpose of the project is two-fold. First, the project will provide the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) with the community's guidance and anticipated reuse goals for the site as the agencies formulate the cleanup plan for the site. While EPA's primary responsibility at Superfund sites is to protect human health and the environment from hazardous materials, the Agency is also required to consider reasonably anticipated future land uses at Superfund sites when deciding how to clean up contaminated areas. Second, the project offers the community an opportunity to come together to learn about the site, discuss community preferences and priorities for the site's potential future uses, and develop a site reuse report that can inform the community's future plans and priorities.

Seventeen Land Use Committee members, in addition to representatives from EPA, IDEM, and the E<sup>2</sup> Inc. consultant team attended the first Committee meeting for the Himco Dump Superfund Redevelopment Initiative Pilot Project.

Committee members include:

- Several neighborhood residents
- Several long-time area residents
- Local school teacher
- Local political representatives
- Potentially responsible party representatives
- One of the site's four property owners
- City of Elkhart staff members
- Elkhart County and regional government representatives
- Local business owners
- Local bank representative
- Local civic organization representatives
- Local parks and recreation representative

During introductions at the beginning of the meeting, Land Use Committee members discussed their reasons for participating in the process. Committee members identified three general categories of interest:

- Interest in site's potential future uses
- Interest in participating in a process that will inform the cleanup of the site
- Interest in site's potential to provide community-wide benefits

### **Introduction to the E<sup>2</sup> Consultant Team and Project Resource Members**

E<sup>2</sup> Inc., the consultant team hired by the City for the reuse planning process, introduced themselves and their roles. The team will be providing research and analysis services, developing a conceptual site reuse strategy based on the Committee's reuse goals, organizing the project's public outreach effort, facilitating Committee meetings, and serving as a liaison between the community's reuse planning process and EPA and IDEM.

Consultant team member James Wilkinson indicated that the team's role is to support the Committee and the City, not to make decisions about reuse. The team will assist the Committee in identifying issues, gathering information, assessing options, seeking community input, and offering recommendations to the Committee. E<sup>2</sup> Inc. does not work for or represent EPA or IDEM.

Mr. Wilkinson introduced the project's resource members from EPA and IDEM. Gwen Massenburg, EPA's remedial project manager (RPM) for the site, Tom Bloom, EPA's Region 5 Regional Reuse Coordinator, and Jessica Fliss, IDEM's project manager for the site, are supporting the Committee process and will be available as resources for the Committee throughout the process. Mr. Wilkinson also indicated that, as resource members, the agency representatives will not be involved in the Committee's decision-making process.

### **Committee Member Roles, Project Ground Rules, and Project Decision-Making**

Consultant team member James Wilkinson reviewed potential Committee member roles for the project and solicited committee feedback and comments. These roles will include:

- Listening to the local community throughout the process and incorporating their perspectives into the Committee's discussions
- Learning about the Superfund program, reuse opportunities, and the Himco Dump site
- Providing the City of Elkhart, US EPA, and IDEM with future land use recommendation(s)
- Serving as local ambassadors and information resources for the community

Committee members did not identify any additional roles.

Consultant team member James Wilkinson reviewed potential project ground rules and solicited Committee feedback and additions. These ground rules will include:

- Committee discussions should be an open, friendly process where different opinions are welcome and respected.
- Clear, understandable language should be used in Committee discussions. Any time that an acronym is used, it should be explained.
- The project should be an interactive process that reaches into the community to provide information and to receive input.
- The Committee will seek consensus on recommendations for the Himco Dump site.
- If full Committee agreement is not possible, an accurate description of group preferences, along with the pros and cons of various options and areas of agreement and disagreement, will be reported to the City, EPA, and IDEM.

Committee members did not identify any additional project ground rules.

Committee members reviewed the project's decision-making structure, confirming that the group will work to achieve consensus to the greatest extent possible.

### **Reuse Planning and the Superfund Program**

Consultant team member James Wilkinson introduced EPA's Superfund Redevelopment Initiative and provided Committee members with background information on reuse planning within the context of the Superfund program. He explained that SRI was created in 1999 to facilitate the return of formerly contaminated sites to productive use. Since its inception, the EPA has awarded grants to approximately 70 communities over the course of three rounds of pilot projects to promote the redevelopment of Superfund sites. Committee members then watched the EPA video *Superfund Redevelopment - Realizing Possibilities*, which provides communities with information about SRI and community-based reuse planning opportunities at Superfund sites. The video focuses on several Superfund sites, including the IndustriPlex site in Massachusetts and the Chisman Creek site in Virginia, that have been remediated and returned to successful reuse.

James Wilkinson discussed land use planning within the context of the Superfund process. He emphasized that:

- Two entities have authority over land use in the United States—private property owners and localities. EPA has no local land use authority. However, under the Superfund program, the Agency's responsibilities and the community's regulatory authority can intersect. EPA policy stipulates that sites must be cleaned up to a reasonably anticipated future land use (RAFLU). Given that the site remedy implemented by EPA will be in place for a long time, Mr. Wilkinson indicated that it is important that the Agency be able to consider RAFLUs from the

community's perspective, as the community will remain responsible for the land's regulation in the future.

- The Himco Dump site is owned by four private property owners—Bayer Corporation, CLD Corporation, Alonzo Kraft, Jr., and the Indiana and Michigan Electric Company. Mr. Wilkinson indicated that, despite the site's status as a Superfund site, the site's property owners retain all rights of land ownership, including the rights to sell, transfer, or subdivide their properties. Mr. Wilkinson indicated that the site's future ownership can be discussed as the reuse planning process moves forward.
- Reuse planning does not drive the site cleanup process and the site's contamination and cost of remediation are significant factors that will need to be kept in mind during the reuse planning process. EPA selects remedies that are protective of human health and the environment.
- The cleanup of Superfund sites like the Himco Dump site can take years, rather than months. The community needs to be prepared to plan over the long-term to return the site to use.
- There is significant value in the completion of small steps at the site, like selecting the placement of roads or removing the site's fence following completion of the site's remedy. Moving from a site that limits public access to an area that community residents can visit and enjoy provides significant quality of life and economic benefits, like local property value increases, and allows the site to blend back into the community over time.

Committee member Joel Robinson, a representative from Bayer Polymers LLC, one of the site's owners and potentially responsible parties, discussed the company's potential future ownership interests at the site. Mr. Robinson indicated that the company has no immediate plans for the portion of the site that it owns, which is located in the northeast corner of the site. Mr. Robinson also indicated that it was unlikely that the company would be interested in developing the site for industrial purposes. He indicated that, at another Superfund site, Bayer retained ownership of a six-acre parcel of land and donated 54 acres of land to the locality for public use. Mr. Robinson indicated that the company could potentially follow a similar course of action at the Himco Dump site.

### **Superfund Remediation Pipeline and Site History**

Consultant team member Jen Trompetter presented a brief history of the Himco Dump site. The presentation addressed:

- the site's cultural and economic importance in the City's history.
- the site's closure in 1976 and listing on the EPA's National Priorities List (NPL) in 1990.
- EPA's Superfund remediation pipeline of activities for NPL sites. The Himco Dump site is currently in the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) phase of the pipeline. During this stage, the nature and extent of site contamination is examined in greater depth and EPA considers a variety of possible remedial options for the site. The reuse planning process for the site will help to inform EPA's selection of an appropriate remedy for the site, as EPA policy stipulates that sites must be cleaned up to a reasonably anticipated future land use (RAFLU).

For further information on the Himco Dump site's history and EPA's remediation process, please refer to the Land Use Committee's information packet.

### **Site Status Update**

EPA site RPM Gwen Massenburg and IDEM project manager Jessica Fliss reviewed the current status of the Himco Dump site. Ms. Massenburg indicated that EPA is in the process of completing the Record of Decision (ROD) for the site, which includes discussions with the potentially responsible parties regarding issues raised during the proposed plan comment period. The ROD is expected to be completed within the next few months. Once the ROD is completed, a consent order will be signed and the design of the project will be submitted to EPA for comment and approval. EPA and IDEM will work to dovetail the ROD with the reuse planning process and integrate the Committee's recommendations with remedial options for the site.

Ms. Massenburg also discussed the potential implications of the site's remedy for future land uses at the Himco Dump site. Institutional controls will permit industrial, commercial, and recreational land uses on the 60-acre landfill portion of the site. Residential land uses will not be permitted on the landfill portion of the site. The location of buildings on the landfill portion of the site would require additional engineering studies, and buildings would have to be located on surface pads, rather than in-ground structural supports, so that the site's remedy would not be affected. Surface pads can typically support single-level buildings.

Ms. Fliss indicated that the soil cover cap that will be placed over portions of the landfill will not require the removal of all of the landfill area's existing vegetation.

### **Site Analysis**

Following a meeting break, consultant team member Jen Trompetter presented a site analysis that situated the Himco Dump site within its surrounding context, including the natural environment, the area's history, and the layout of the City of Elkhart. Ms. Trompetter explained that an understanding of the site's original context and surroundings can help inform the future use of the site.

In its early years, the City's location along the Elkhart and St. Joseph Rivers and proximity to rail lines attracted new residents to the area. Available transportation networks provided the area with a unique strategic advantage and the area became a hub for timber production and agriculture. The City of Elkhart also developed as a center for business entrepreneurship, manufacturing operations, and technical innovation. Today, agriculture, manufacturing operations, and technical innovation remain economic mainstays in the City of Elkhart and Elkhart County. Seven companies produce band instruments for national and international markets. Local industries include recreational vehicle manufacturing, manufactured homes, and audio equipment and electronic component manufacturing. About half of all recreational vehicles produced in the United States are manufactured in Elkhart County.

## **Market Analysis**

To inform the Committee's reuse discussions, consultant team member James Wilkinson presented an initial market analysis of the market demand for different types of land uses and the availability of land in the City and surrounding region to meet this demand. Based on the City's 1996 *Land Use Plan*, 1997 *Downtown Redevelopment Plan*, the 2003 *Society of Industrial and Commercial Realtors Report*, and interviews with representatives from the City of Elkhart, Elkhart County, and Grubb & Ellis/Cressy & Everett Realty, the analysis' initial conclusions included:

- Current market conditions in Elkhart are variable by the type of land use, with minimal commercial office growth and location-specific commercial retail, industrial, and residential growth in the City of Elkhart and Elkhart County.
- Significant amounts of land are available for commercial and industrial development in the City of Elkhart.
- Significant amounts of land are available for commercial, industrial, and residential development in Elkhart County.
- The City's 1996 *Land Use Plan*, the Horizon Project's 2003 *Final Report*, and interviews with City and County staff indicate the need to protect, enhance, and expand existing open space, park, and recreation resources.

Based on these findings, Mr. Wilkinson indicated that the implications for the Himco Dump site could be that, unless the site offers unique advantages, commercial, industrial, and residential development is more likely to be located in already-targeted areas, like the Aeroplex Business Park or Elkhart East Business Community. These types of land uses at the site could also remove opportunities from targeted development areas.

To review the consultant team's initial market analysis in detail, please refer to the Land Use Committee packet.

## **Committee Discussion: Site Reuse Opportunities and Challenges**

Ms. Trompetter presented a series of maps highlighting patterns of local land uses to illustrate the site's relationship with its surroundings. The maps delineated current transportation networks, as well as commercial, industrial, residential, recreational, and civic land uses in the City of Elkhart. For additional information on the land use maps presented at the meeting, please refer to the Land Use Committee packet.

Committee members then discussed each of these maps in turn, brainstorming potential site reuse opportunities and challenges. Committee members discussed a wide range of reuse considerations and opportunities for the Himco Dump site:

### *Transportation Networks*

- Committee members indicated that the site is surrounded by two roads – County Road 10 and John Weaver Parkway – that have significant amounts of fast-moving traffic.
- Committee members noted that cars are the easiest way to currently reach the Himco Dump site. Bike access and pedestrian access is challenging due to the speed and amount of traffic on both County Road 10 and John Weaver Parkway. However, it was noted that there currently is consistent bike traffic along County Road 10, particularly kids on bikes.
- Committee members indicated that access to the site in the future should be coordinated with the site's future uses, so that the access points are designated adjacent to on-site areas where people will congregate.
- Committee members noted that future road access and any parking lots at the site would need to take storm water management into account, which should be considered in the site's design.

### *Residential and Cultural Land Uses*

- Committee members agreed that residential land uses could face several challenges at the Himco Dump site. Residential land uses would likely not be compatible with industrial development in the adjacent Aeroplex Business Park. Residential land uses would likely require significant infrastructure investments. The site's remedy also will not permit residential land uses on the landfill portion of the site.
- Committee members confirmed that the demand for new residential areas is being met elsewhere in Elkhart County, including Cleveland Township, which is located to the west and north of the site.
- Committee members suggested that cultural, recreational or ecological land uses, such as a bird sanctuary, nature trails, community gathering areas or a park, could provide amenities for both existing community residents and the growing numbers of new community residents in Cleveland Township.

### *Recreation and Ecological Land Uses*

- Committee members were interested in a wide range of recreational and ecological land uses at the site, including sports fields, a bird sanctuary, a nature center, walking and biking trails, and a golf course. Additional information will be gathered by the project's consultant team to determine the need for different types of open space and recreational land uses in the community.



- Committee members indicated that open space land uses, such as a park, at the site could provide community-wide benefits and that the site could be large enough to incorporate multiple uses.
- Committee members noted that parks, recreation and ecological land uses may not generate revenues and could be an added fiscal cost for future landowners at the site, including the City of Elkhart. To build support for this type of reuse of the Himco Dump site and address potential costs, the City could partner with Elkhart County. The County may also be able to provide access to state funding from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.
- Committee members indicated that land uses at the site could include recognition of the site's history and completion of the site's cleanup, celebrating the site's transformation and regeneration as a community resource.
- Committee members noted that recreation and other open space land uses could fit well with the site's proposed remedy. However, members also expressed a concern that active and passive recreational uses at the site may not be compatible with one another.
- Committee members indicated an interest in linking the site to existing trails that are near downtown Elkhart.

#### *Commercial Land Uses*

- Committee members discussed several different types of potential commercial land uses for the site. Much of the discussion focused on commercial forms of recreational land uses that could generate revenue to support the site's reuse.
- Commercial land uses discussed by the Committee included a large meeting space that could be flexibly adapted to different community events and gatherings. The meeting space could include buildings or could simply be outdoor space. A high-quality RV park could also generate revenues and provide an amenity for both residents and visitors, particularly given the site's proximity to major transportation networks, but could also generate significant amounts of traffic. The Committee also noted that an amphitheater could also generate revenues, but might compete with existing facilities in downtown Elkhart.
- Committee members discussed the relationship between the Himco Dump site and the Aeroplex Business Park, which is located directly north of the site. A Committee member indicated that the business park is available for development, but that it will likely take approximately 5-10 years before the southern portion of the business park is developed.
- Committee members indicated that the site's northern boundary, including the quarry lake, provides a natural buffer area between the Aeroplex Business Park and future land uses at the Himco Dump site. Committee members also noted that, in the future, recreational or open space land uses at the site could provide a nearby amenity for business park employees but that

the Himco site and the Aeroplex Business Park need not relate to one another considering that the business park will not be fully developed for many years.

### *Industrial Land Uses*

- The Committee agreed that industrial uses at the site would be incompatible with surrounding residential land uses.

### **Next Steps**

Following the Committee's discussion, the first meeting of the Land Use Committee for the Himco Dump Superfund Redevelopment Initiative Pilot Project came to a close.

The date for the second Committee meeting, which will take place in Elkhart City Hall, will be scheduled for late May or June 2004. The meeting date will be finalized by late April. The second Committee meeting will be a workshop-style discussion. During the meeting, Committee members will review and discuss conceptual site reuse approaches developed by the project's consultant team that reflect the Committee's reuse ideas and preferences.

Consultant team member James Wilkinson also indicated that, if Committee members have any project-related questions, he can be contacted at (434) 975-6700 or [jwilkinson@e2inc.com](mailto:jwilkinson@e2inc.com).

Committee members can also contact Craig Hodgson, the City of Elkhart's Brownfields Coordinator, at (574) 294-5471.

**Himco Dump Superfund Redevelopment Initiative Reuse Planning Process  
Contact Lists**

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